



April 2014

www.u3abayofislands.wordpress.com

U3A Bay of Islands, PO Box 833, Kerikeri 0245

U3A.Bay.of.Islands@gmail.com

From the President

March has been a busy month for your committee with our main emphasis on improving our communication with members and potential new members.

First we designed a simple survey for you, our members, to give us feedback on our newsletter and website. See page two for more information.

We then improved the brochure/application form for potential new members. Pam Jenkins came up with a sunny slogan to brighten up the brochure and we produced the graphic you can see in several places in this newsletter. The brochure is now available in the Proctor Library and it can be downloaded from our website.

Pam organized our presentation and display for the Senior Expo on 8th March. I wasn't there since that was the day Keith and I flew to Melbourne to visit our new grandchild and her doting parents. However I heard from several people that Pam gave an excellent talk about U3A. She also put together two interesting and attractive displays, one for the Expo and another which is currently in the Proctor Library. Do have a look.

Thank you Pam for the enormous amount of work you've done promoting U3A and thank you also to all our members who helped with the displays at Senior Expo and in the Library.

Lesley McNaughton



U3A display in Proctor Library window

Untold Stories of the Kerikeri Mission

Liz Bigwood

Manager of the Kerikeri Mission Station will entertain us with fascinating stories about the life of early missionaries.

10:30 am, Wednesday 30th April 2014

St. John Ambulance Hall, Kerikeri Road

Bring any friends who are interested in U3A.

Please bring finger food for our shared lunch. Kitchen Duty: Local History Group One.



Note: this meeting is not on our usual meeting day.

From the committee

Group news

Art House Films Group Two

Our second *Art House Films* group is ready to start. Their first meeting will be on Friday 25 April at 1.30 pm at the home of Keith McNaughton. I am delighted that Keith has agreed to be the facilitator as well as continuing to lead the original film group and I am sure this one will prove just as popular. We have room for one or two more people so please let me know if you would like to join the new group and have the opportunity to view films which are not often available in commercial cinemas.

New Book Group?

Our two existing book groups are very popular and rarely have space for new members. If we have sufficient interest, we will look at setting up a third group so please let me know as soon as possible if you are interested. Don't miss out as this group may fill very quickly. My contact details are in the committee list and at the end of this newsletter.

Margaret Rasmussen

Facilitators' meeting – 2 pm on Saturday 12th April

All facilitators are invited to this annual meeting to talk about how their groups are progressing, share ideas and pass on suggestions to the committee. If you can't attend, please arrange for another member to represent your group. The venue is the McNaughton home and the committee will provide afternoon tea. RSVP to Lesley@mcnaughty.com by 8th April.

Senior Expo



Pam at Senior Expo

The committee would like to thank Pam for speaking about U3A at the Senior Expo. Her genuine enthusiasm shone through and inspired many in the audience.

Thanks to our volunteers who looked after our display and talked enthusiastically to visitors about U3A. This has already attracted new members.



U3A display at Senior Expo 8 March 2014

New members

Welcome to Pat de Meurers and Jim Wayman. We hope you will enjoy belonging to U3A and make many new friends. You are welcome to visit groups that may interest you before deciding which you want to join. Please contact the facilitators first.

Newsletter survey

In recent issues of the newsletter we have varied the number and length of group reports and tried different formats. Now your committee would like to know what you prefer. We have prepared a simple survey that you can complete in a few minutes and send without revealing your identity. We urge all members to complete this survey so that we'll get an accurate indication of members' opinions.

If you have an email address we will send you a message with a link to click so you can complete the survey online. We ask other members to complete and post back the survey sent with this newsletter.

We would appreciate responses from all members. Please send them by 16th April



Featured groups

Art History

Some would say that it is unwise to look into the background of a painting, but this group has been looking at the BBC series *The Private Life of a Masterpiece* and we have learnt that no painting lives in isolation. We can gain so much more by examining a work of art more closely and learning about the artist and his background.



Some of the artists did not achieve fame in their own lifetime. Vincent van Gogh only ever sold one painting. This pastor's son is now famous for those brilliant sunflowers. The heads of these flowers follow the sun and they are therefore seen as a symbol for the followers of God. Could this be a motivation for painting these flowers? Or could it be the fact that chrome yellow paint had only just become available? Imagine his excitement at using this vibrant colour on his canvasses. Learning about the background of a painting gives us a deeper understanding of it.

During the Renaissance, rich blue pigment was obtained from lapis lazuli, a semi-precious stone more valuable than gold. Paint made with this pigment was only used for garments of important people, especially the Virgin Mary. Had the most expensive pigment been yellow ochre would our Christmas cards now feature a canary yellow Virgin Mary?

Pieter Bruegel's *Census at Bethlehem* depicts a snowy Christmas scene, but why did he cover Jerusalem in snow? Closer inspection reveals that the scene is actually the artist's own native Flanders. But there is more. Bruegel treats this biblical story as a contemporary event. In the sixteenth century the Low Countries were engaged in a series of bloody conflicts with the Spanish Hapsburg rulers. Is the artist depicting the severity of the Spanish administration or is it just a general criticism of bureaucratic methods?

This series gives us a chance to look at art in its context, a window in time, an opportunity to discover not just more about the life of the artists and their materials and techniques, but also about their history culture, religion, and politics. What inspired them?

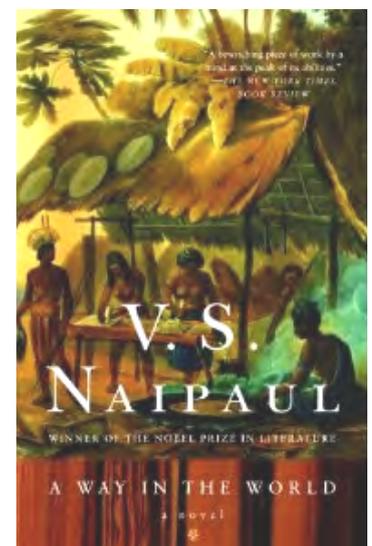
Iris Steensma

Book Discussion one

Book Discussion One is a lively group, many of whose participants have been members for several years. After our late facilitator passed away last year we decided to share this role and rotate discussion leaders and venues on a monthly basis. One member acts as focal point for the purposes of the U3A Committee.

Usually we select a theme each month for the following month and each member reads a book on that theme. This makes for a very varied selection of books and the ensuing discussion is often quite animated and at times punctuated by much hilarity. For example, last month our theme was a "book written by a winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature". (For some reason three people chose a work by V.S Naipaul.) This month our theme is "a book from our bookshelves". We discuss the theme book before the afternoon tea/coffee break, after which we present other books that we may have read in the meantime.

We also run a "lending library" among ourselves, carefully recording whose book has been lent to whom and when it is returned.



Maggie Murray-Lee

Creative Writing

This group has been running for several years with participants changing over that time. Joy Olds is our facilitator and her home in its peaceful country setting is an ideal venue where we are always welcomed with a cup of coffee and a delicious afternoon tea.

The group is kept small as we share our writing by reading pieces aloud to the other members of the group. Some tell very personal stories so confidentiality is always respected. As it is hard to critique your own writing, we all gain a great deal from the honest criticism and suggestions of our fellow writers.



Have you thought of writing your memoirs? Like many people, we have too but most of us have found many reasons for not getting started. The exception is one of our members who has already published his very interesting memoir. At present we are working through an excellent series from U3A Online called *My Life Story*. This has helped us to answer questions such as "Who am I writing for?", "What research methods can I use?" and "How does my story fit into world events?". Each exercise encourages us to use a technique such as dialogue or humour to make our stories more interesting. Perhaps the main value of the course is that it has made us actually start writing, building up a collection of stories which may be put together later.

We also have a lot of fun with other types of writing, both fiction and non-fiction, as well as poetry. Topics may come from a starter such as *The moon was shining brightly when....* or from a photograph or headline. It is always amazing to see how the same topic can produce such completely different results and we benefit from seeing the many ways in which a piece of writing can be approached.

Margaret Rasmussen

Local History Group One



Lunch in Kohukohu

This local history group went on a 'long distance' trip to the Hokianga in March. Our guide in Kohukohu was the local photographer Marg Morrow, a resident of Kohukohu for 37 years, and exceptionally knowledgeable. Our walking tour took us through streets mostly ignored by the ferry traffic. There were old photographs outside the places of interest and it was well worth the visit.

After a lunch we took the car ferry to Rawene, and visited Clendon House, where Lindsay was our guide. His humorous yet factual account of the family of James Reddy Clendon, and his links to the Bay of Islands brought the Hokianga history to life.

Judy Ramsey

2013 - 2014 Committee			
President & Editor	Lesley McNaughton	09 407 6936	lesley@mcaughty.com
Vice President	Stuart Leitch	09 407 3458	sleitch21@gmail.com
Secretary & Publicity Officer	Pam Jenkins	09 407 7020	pmjenkins@xtra.co.nz
Treasurer	Maebeth Hart	09 407 5100	casatres@xtra.co.nz
Meeting Coordinator	Liz Berry	09 407 3202	berrynice@xtra.co.nz
Group Convenor & Editor	Margaret Rasmussen	09 402 8949	ras1@clear.net.nz
Committee Member	Grainger Brown	09 407 7247	g-brown@paradise.net.nz

 Editors: Margaret Rasmussen tel: 09 402 8949 email: ras1@clear.net.nz
 Lesley McNaughton tel: 09 407 6936 email: Lesley@mcaughty.com
